

Francis M. Dimond House
617 Hope Street
Bristol
Bristol County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-128

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PHOTOGRAPHS

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

FRANCIS M. DIMOND HOUSE

HABS No. RI-128

Location: 617 Hope Street, Bristol, Bristol County,
Rhode Island.

USGS Bristol, Rhode Island - Massachusetts
Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coord-
inates: 19.310660.4615450.

Present Owner: Elise Sansone.

Present Occupant: Dr. Peter and Elise Sansone and family.

Present Use: Personal residence and medical offices of
Dr. Sansone.

Significance: The Dimond House was designed by Russell Warren,
a prominent Rhode Island architect, for former
Governor Francis M. Dimond in the impressive
Greek Revival mode.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of construction: The Dimond House was built circa 1838. The original building is a temple like structure with a single story polygonal room attached to the north elevation and a two story service ell protruding from the west elevation. The present carriage house is believed to be contemporary with the main structure. An 1880 lithograph shows the carriage house and gazebo or tea house structure of which there are no visible remains nor records. (Munro, W.H. p. 129)
2. Architect: The house was designed by Russell Warren. Warren (1783-1860) was a self-taught architect who is considered the earliest exponent of the Greek Revival style in Rhode Island. Although he was not restricted to the Greek Revival style, Warren is remembered for the nationally known Weybosset Street facade of "The Arcade" in Providence, Rhode Island, an excellent example of this style. During the year 1835-36 Warren formed a partnership with the Alexander J. Davis of New York.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is a complete chain of title to the land and structure. (From the office the Recorder of Deeds Bristol County, Bristol Town Hall; Bristol, Rhode Island.)
1833 Deed June 14, 1833 recorded November 13, 1833, Book 14, Page 95. Arthur Middleton and others sold a lot land on Hope Street to Francis M. Dimond for the sum of \$1050.00.

- 1838 Deed August 22, 1838 recorded August 30, 1838, Book 18, Page 165. Francis M. Dimond deeds land, buildings and their contents to his lawyer, Joseph M. Blake for the purposes of liquidation due to bankruptcy. (The list of the contents of the house has been reproduced for HABS record.)
- 1840 Deed February 10, 1840 recorded February 14, 1840, Book 18, Pages 258, 259. Joseph M. Blake sold Hope Street property to Joseph L. Gardner, a Master Mariner, for the sum of \$4500.00.
- 1875 Deed June 5, 1875 recorded January 12, 1876. Book 40, Page 258. Joseph L. Gardner deeds the property in trust to his lawyer Charles R. Cutter. (Mr. Gardner is dieing of brain disease.)
- 1875 Deed September 27, 1876 recorded November 9, 1876, book 40 Page 258. Charles R. Cutter, Trustee, deeds property to Mary J.L. Gardner, wife of Joseph.
- 1878 Deed September 21, 1878 recorded September 25, 1878, Book 42, Page 156. Mary J. L. Gardner deeds property to John Collins.
- 1899 Deed June 12, 1899 recorded June 13, 1899, Book 57 Page 98. John Collins and Robert Collins deeds property to Julius C. Gallup.
- 1922 Deed February 3, 1922 recorded February 3, 1922, Book 84 Page 141. Juluis C. Gallup deeds property to William J. McShane.
- 1922 Deed February 3, 1922 recorded February 3, 1922, Book 84 Page 461. William J. McShane deeds property to Julius C. and Jennie H. Gallup.
- 1933 Deed November 10, 1938 recorded November 10, 1938, Book 105 Page 222. Julius C. and Jennie H. Gallup deed property to william L. Serbst and Mary C. Serbst (wife).
- 1938 Deed November 10, 1938 recorded November 10, 1938, Book 108 Page 482. Erza W. Mason, the guardian of the estate of, Jennie H. Gallup, to William L. Serbst Jr.
- 1970 Deed December 21, 1970 recorded December 21, 1970, Book 174 Page 656. William L. Serbst Jr. deeds property to Dr. Peter J. and Elise J.E. Sansone.
- 1976 Deed January 1, 1976 recorded January 1, 1976, Book 204 Page 251. Peter J. and Elise J.E. Sansone change joint ownership to individual ownership of Elise J.E.

4. Builder: Possibly Samuel Warren, Brother of Russell Warren. Samuel is known to have built several of his brother's designs.
5. Alterations and additions: The first addition, with its Gothic influence of the 1840's being evident in the lancet windows, is located on the west side. Russell Warren is believed to be responsible for this addition.

The remaining two additions were built in 1941, they contain the modern bathroom on the second floor, north elevation and the modern kitchen located off the service ell. William O' Rourke performed these alterations.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

1. Francis M. Dimond, original owner of the house, was former Governor of **Rhode Island**. At the time the house was erected Dimond is listed as a prominent merchant.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Original architectural drawings: Original Architectural drawings (1938) by William O'Rourke, architect, showing main structure before alterations and proposed additions, some which were carried out. (reproduced for HABS record).
2. Old Views: 1880 lithograph, page 129, The Story of the Mount Hope Lands. The lithograph views the house without its modern bathroom and with a no longer existing gazebo.
3. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books, 14 page 95; no. 18 page 165, 258, 259; no. 40 page 340; no. 42 page 156; no. 57 page 98; no. 84 pages 141, 461; no. 105 page 222; no. 108 page 482; no. 174 page 656; no. 204 page 251; Bristol Town Hall, Bristol County, Rhode Island.

"Architecture of Russell Warren" Thesis Paper, 1952, New York University, Alexander Roberth, Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence. General Information about Russell Warren.

"Rhode Island Architecture: A Bibliography" 1974, Nancy F. Chudacoff, Rhode Island Historical Society.

b. Secondary and published sources:

Dewolf, Alice. Architectural and Historical, Bristol, Rhode Island. Providence, Rhode Island, 1960. Providence, Rhode Island, 1960.

Bristol Phoenix Souvenir Supplement. Bristol, Rhode Island, 1903. (Photo of Dimond-Gallup Residence).

275 Anniversary Town of Bristol, Rhode Island. Bristol, Rhode Island, 1955.

Munro, W.H. The Story of the Mount Hope Lands. Providence, Rhode Island, 1881. (Illustration page 129, house before the addition, also showing the outbuildings).

"Russell Warren, Builder of Greek Temples". Phoenix-Times Newspapers, East Bay Window Supplement. Bristol, Rhode Island. June 9-10, 1976. (photo of Warren).

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Historic Preservation
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Roger Williams College

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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Dimond House is an excellent example of the Greek Revival style. The theme is evident in the two story, tetrastyle, Ionic, east portico. On the grounds, to the rear of the main structure is located a carriage house which appears to be contemporary to the building of the house in 1838.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. Though the house is in need of minor preservative repairs, (i.e. paint) it is structurally sound.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: the shape of the house is basically a rectangle with two polygonal protrusions as well as a service ell off the back or west elevation. There are two and a half stories high. The house floor plans consist of a basement, first floor, second floor, and an attic.
2. Foundations: The foundation is of irregularly coursed stone under the main house and service ell, the east facade is faced in granite. The Gothic 1840's addition also has a foundation of stone which was at some later date faced with poured concrete. The 1941 kitchen addition foundation is entirely of poured concrete.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: The entire structure is of wood construction and is painted white and appears to have been originally white. The east facade is sheathed in match board while the remaining faces are of clapboards.
4. Structural system, framing: The house is constructed by post and beam using the mortise and tenoned technique.
5. Porches, stoops: The house has two wooden porches on the east and west facades. The east portico is tetrastyle with four Ionic columns, it has a pink granite staircase of six steps and encompasses two stories. The west porch is of the shed type and was probably built along with the Gothic 1840's addition.
6. Chimneys: The building has three, red brick, interior chimneys, two on the south side, to serve the double parlors and the bedrooms above. There is also an outlet to serve for a stovepipe which appears to have been for the original kitchen. The outlet is located in the basement below what is now the doctor's offices on the first floor. At some point in time the eastern most chimney on the south side has been dismantled to the interior of the attic roof line.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The east or front door is of solid wood, painted black with two panels in the Greek Revival style. The doorway has two Ionic columns which carry a false keystone style lentil. Behind these columns are found side lights extending to one foot above the portico floor. These lights are of stained and etched glass. Above the door is a transome opaque glass. The west or back Greek Revival door is of solid wood, painted black and has two panels. Also above this door is a transom of opaque glass.
- b. Windows and shutters: Windows in the house are double hung sash of varying descriptions. Three windows on the first floor, east elevation are of six lights over nine and extend to the floor. Two other windows of the same description are found on the west elevation in the 1840's Gothic addition. Also located in the Gothic addition is a protrusion which contains seven lancet arched windows, each having four large vertical lights. The east facade windows have a pair of moveable, black louvered shutters each. The south side shutters do not appear to be contemporary to the main structure.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main structure has a gabled roof with asbestos shingles. The 1840's Gothic addition has a shed roof covered with tin and painted silver. Other appendages have sectioned hip roofs, covered with asbestos shingles.
- b. Cornices: The cornices are of wood in an elaborate Greek style.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: There is a basement under the entire structure. It has a central hall with five areas opening from it. It has been partitioned off with either brick or stone, respectively, to form a central hall with five areas opening from it. In one of these areas a corner has been sectioned off with wood planking and glass windows to form what appears to be a storage cubicle which is contemporary to the house. There is remaining evidence that two wood stoves were used in the basement. There are remains of early lath and plaster on the ceilings.

- b. First floor: The first floor has a central hall with exterior doors at each end. Starting on the south side of the hall proceeding east to west are found double parlors, with matched fireplaces, and the Gothic 184's addition. Starting on the north side of the hall proceeding east to west are found the doctor's polygonal waiting room (possibly the original diningroom) two rooms serving as offices and examining rooms (original kitchen areas) and the 1941 modern kitchen addition.
 - c. Second floor: The second floor does not encompass the first floor and the hall is not centralized on the second story. The front part of the hall has been enclosed to form a small room. Found next to the small room is the master bedroom with a fireplace, another large bedroom also with a fireplace, and a fourth smaller bedroom with a curved wall formed by the back hallway. The 1941 modern bathroom addition is the only room found to the north side of the hall. Located in the service ell, four steps down from the second floor of the main structure, is a sitting,
2. Stairways: In the front hallway there is an open-well staircase running from the first floor to the second. The mass of the stairs runs up to a landing, lit by a window, at which point it turns at a ninety degree angle to the left. A simple, molded handrail, originating at a massive newel post with a "peace stone", on the first floor, running the length of the stairs. A narrow, closed service staircase is found in the rear, west side of the building. It rises from the basement through the second story to the attic.
 3. Flooring: The floors of the original structure are of pine. Those of the Gothic addition are of maple. Many areas are wall to wall carpeted.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls are plastered, and painted or papered in various colors. Ceilings are plastered and painted white. Plaster medallions are found in each of the double parlors, the polygonal northeast room, and the stairhall. Most rooms have plaster crown moldings.
 5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Most of the doors are of solid wood and painted white in the four panel Greek Revival style, with matching doorways, some which portray the columns of the exterior portico. Located in the northeast polygonal room is a four panel door in which the panels are of etched glass. Between the double parlors are found a pair of wood, four panel doors that slide into wall pockets. Separating the west parlor from the Gothic addition there are two

sets of sliding pocket doors. Each set contains two doors, with each door having four vertical panels. The top three panels are of glass while the bottom ones are of wood. These doorways were originally windows and were converted at the time of the Gothic addition. The doors and moldings of the Gothic addition match the Grecian style of the original structure.

b. Windows: The interior window trim is of the same Grecian style as the interior doorways. The trim of the main structures window trim. The windows of the double parlors, and the front window of the polygonal room have interior folding pocketed shutters. Each window in the Gothic protrusion has a pair of interior, louvered, lancet arch shaped shutters.

6. Decorative features: The double parlors have of matched onyx and marble fireplaces, with pressed, black painted inserts(possibly for coal fires). These fireplaces emulate the outside Grecian trim. The two bedrooms above have a pair of matched wooden, Grecian fireplaces.

7. Historic furnishings: Located at opposite ends of the double parlors are Victorian ~~era~~ matched pier glasses which are ebonized and picked out in gold.

8. Hardware: The doors on the Gothic addition and the front door have silver plate door knobs. The remaining doors in the house have cut glass door knobs.

9. Mechanical equipment:

a. Lighting: In the front entry hall a glass and brass globe lighting fixture hangs. This fixture may have originally been a gasolier. Found intact in the basement are fixtures and pipes from a gas lighting system.

b. Electrical The Gothic addition contains what appears to be the remains of an early electrical system, located in a wooden cubicle in the wall.

c. Heating: There are four fireplaces and several openings in the basement for stove pipes.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces east on a rectangular lot, abutting the main street of a small town.

2. Outbuildings: A carriage house, that appears to be contemporary to the building of the main house, is located on the rear of the property.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic Preservation and Architectural departments of Roger Williams College in Bristol, Rhode Island, under the general supervision of John Burnes, an architect from the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The entire project encompassed four houses designed by Russell Warren in Bristol. Project Directors were Dr. Kevin Jordan (Historic Preservationist) and Professor Americo Mallozzi (Architect, AIA) of Roger Williams College. Team Supervisor was Student, Janet Porter. The Dimond House was measured in September-November, 1979 by Janet Porter, Carl Dickson, Peter DeSimone, Cris Rickels, Douglas Sinclair, Deborah Stahly, and Julia Sniderman. The measured drawings were prepared by DeSimone (Student Architect, A.S.), Porter (A.S. Architectural technology, Student Preservationist), Sinclair (Student Preservationist), Rickels (Student Preservationist). The authors of the architectural and historical reports are Dickson (Student Preservationist), and Stahly (B.A. History, Student Preservationist). Field photographs were taken by Sniderman (Student Preservationist) and the documentary photographs are by Laura Barbeau (Student Preservationist) and Sniderman.